

Website Design Brief

CKS Millwork · Custom Architectural Millwork & Cabinetry · Durham, NC cksmillwork.com

About Us

CKS Millwork is an award-quality custom architectural millwork and cabinetry firm based in Durham, North Carolina, established in 1988. We produce high-end commercial interiors (hotels, universities, luxury retail) and residential built-ins for architects, interior designers, and discerning homeowners. We hold AWI Quality Certification Program (QCP) Premium Grade — the highest tier in the industry —. Roughly 70% of our work is commercial and 30% residential.

Our current website does not reflect the caliber of the work we produce. We are running this contest to redesign it. We want the site to sit visually alongside the top-tier architectural millwork firms in the country — Mark Richey Woodworking, Zepa Industries, Fetzner Architectural Woodwork, and Liebhaver — and to feel at home next to editorial features in *Architectural Digest* and *House Beautiful*.

What We Need

Complete visual design for a marketing website of approximately 5–7 pages. **Design deliverables only** — we will hand the final files to a developer for implementation. Please submit in Figma (preferred), Framer, or Adobe XD. High-resolution PNG or PDF exports are acceptable for the contest entry itself.

Pages in scope:

- Home
- Projects / Portfolio (with filtering for Commercial vs. Residential)
- Individual Project Case Study template (one design that can be replicated)
- Services / Capabilities
- About / Our Story (including certifications, team, and facility)
- Blog- with updatable content
- Contact
- Optional: Process page

Both desktop and mobile designs are required for each page. Tablet reference is a plus but not required.

Aesthetic Direction

Editorial, magazine-quality, restrained. This is the opposite of a busy corporate contractor site. Reference points: *Architectural Digest*, *House Beautiful*, *Milieu*, *Dezeen*, and the websites of the millwork firms listed above.

Key visual principles:

- **Photography-forward.** Our project photography is our strongest asset — layouts should give images room to breathe. Full-bleed heroes, generous negative space, minimal chrome around images.
- **Serious, refined typography.** A high-quality serif for headlines (something in the Canela, GT Sectra, Publico, or Freight Display family) paired with a clean, neutral sans (Söhne, Neue Haas Grotesk, or similar). Not Google Fonts defaults.
- **Muted, sophisticated color palette.** Warm neutrals, deep charcoal, off-white, one restrained accent. No bright blues, no gradients, no stock "modern tech" palette.
- **Minimal navigation.** Small, quiet header. No sticky CTAs, no chatbots, no popups.

- **Slow, intentional feel.** This is a company whose work takes months to build. The site should feel considered, not urgent.

Reference Sites

Please review before submitting. Entries that clearly haven't engaged with these references will not be considered.

- markrichey.com
- zepso.com
- fetzer.com
- liebhaberwood.com
- Any *Architectural Digest* project feature page

What We Will Provide

- Professional project photography (multiple projects, high resolution) — **attached to this posting. Please use these images in your mockups.** We want to see how your design treats our actual work, not stock photography.
- Existing copy for About, Services, and project descriptions
- Logo files
- Brand color preferences (we are open to your recommendations)
- Certification badges (AWI QCP, MBE)

What We Will Not Consider

- Wix, Squarespace, or WordPress template flips
- "Modern" agency portfolio templates with animated gradients
- Bootstrap-style corporate layouts
- AI-generated designs presented as-is without designer judgment applied
- Entries that use stock photography instead of the project images we've provided
- Entries from designers who clearly haven't reviewed the reference sites above

Submission Guidelines

For an entry to be seriously considered, please include:

- At minimum, a full **Home page** design in both desktop and mobile. Entries with only a home page will be reviewed, but entries that also include a **Projects / Portfolio** page and a **Project Case Study** page will be given significant preference — those pages are where the aesthetic argument for millwork actually lives.
- Use our provided photography, not stock images.
- A brief note (2–3 sentences) on your typography and color choices, so we understand your intent.

We will provide feedback on strong entries so you can refine them before final selection. Boilerplate submissions and template flips will be rejected without feedback.

We will get our programmer to take the winning design and program it in wordpress for the final step

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